



U.S. EMBASSY – BAGHDAD

News Release



For Immediate Release
2011/04

September 27, 2011
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New TOEFL Center at Commission of Integrity Supports Iraq-U.S. Fight against Corruption, Financial Crimes and Terrorist Financing

Over the next 18 months, the U.S. Embassy in Iraq will provide approximately \$580,000 toward establishing the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) center at the Commission on Integrity (COI). These funds will provide English-language training for 100 COI employees. The investigators and prosecutors in the program will receive a minimum of 288 hours of instruction, with most taking 600 hours of classes. The beginning students will study with COI English experts, while the U.S. Embassy will provide a native English-speaking teacher for the advanced courses. At the end of the program, 20 students will be chosen to participate in a 90-day English-language immersion opportunity in the United States. Testing at the TOEFL center will be a critical tool in ensuring that the selected participants are ready for that experience.

This training will help Iraqi law enforcement institutions fight corruption, financial crimes, and terrorist financing. Since English is the primary world language for law enforcement, investigators and prosecutors who are fluent in English are better able to develop a truly successful international anticorruption entity that can effectively coordinate and cooperate with foreign law enforcement authorities.

The inauguration of the TOEFL Center at the COI on September 21 constitutes a milestone in the Commission's programming to achieve that goal, as well as a measure of the growing partnership between the governments of the United States and Iraq to combat corruption. By opening the center to the public as well, the COI will share this resource with other Iraqis hoping to apply for English language-based studies and employment.

The TOEFL Center will also be critical to the Commission's ability to ensure proper scoring of English ability of employees in the Commission's "Timoooh" program. The goal of this five-year program is to teach 500 of the Commission's staff to speak, read, and write English. The first students in the program began to study English this summer, with the help of a grant from the U.S. Embassy.

English teaching cooperation is only one aspect of U.S. support for the COI over the past seven years. Embassy technical advisors have worked with investigators and administrators in Baghdad and 15 provincial offices to develop the COI's capacity to combat, prevent, and investigate corruption. Among many projects in support of this goal, the U.S. Embassy trained over 2,000 COI staff in up-to-date methods for investigating corruption and helped the Commission to establish Iraq's first internationally accredited polygraph unit.

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